

February 19, 2016

Instructional Quality Commission
California Department of Education
1430 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-5901

RE: Comments on 2014-2015 Draft History-Social Science Framework Update

Dear Commissioners:

I would like to commend the Instructional Quality Commission on continuing the important work our committee started in 2009. Now with an end in sight I would like to add the following comments for your consideration:

1. Current Events Chapter 1 Pages 1-4

I cannot find any specific mention of the importance of teaching current events. Ideally Current Events should be added to the Framework's Introduction as we live in a rapidly changing world with global shifts and events impacting Americans everyday. Incorporating current events in social science lessons is critical for students to understand the complexities of social processes. Education reformer John Dewey was an advocate for relevance and developing civically literate students. I found his thoughts regarding the benefits of teaching current events to be essential for social science educators as they strive to help students understand why world events unfold today where they do. For the past 28 years I found the inclusion of current events to be very valuable and worthwhile as they are highly relevant and an excellent point of departure for discussing and analyzing sociological, economic, historical and geographical aspects of current conflicts, movements, geopolitical upheavals, environmental issues, wars and terrorism.

For the past ten years our HSS Department at San Marcos Middle School frequently included CNN Student News, C-SPAN, and global Internet news sites into our daily lessons. Our objective was to increase students' global competencies, awareness of significant events and their ramifications, and geographic, media and civic literacy.

Students respond positively to the inclusion of current national and world events. Through discussion and analysis of current events, students gain a much deeper understanding of the impact of historical, social and economic events and their implications.

2. Chapter 14 Human Geography Page 382 Line 24

I would like recommend that Human Geography be added as a 9th Grade Course elective. Also AP Human Geography, one of the fastest growing AP courses in the nation, could be offered as a 9th grade elective along with World and Regional Geography. It's highly relevant focusing on population issues, cultural patterns and

processes, geopolitics, agriculture and rural land use, industrialization and economic development, cities and urban land use, and the impact of globalization.

This year the Sweetwater Union High School District offered a new Human Geography course. They also offer AP Human Geography. The San Marcos Unified School District is considering the addition of AP Human Geography as a 9th grade elective. Human Geography could be a course that would be engaging and rich in content and would help elevate the literacy and critical thinking levels of the students paying dividends in future courses including AP or IB courses.

Below is an example of a Human Geography course description:

Human Geography Course Description at Oceanside High School, Oceanside, CA

Human geographers are concerned with the "who", "what", "where", "why", "when", and "how" of humans their interrelationships and their relationship to the environment:

1. Who is doing what?
2. What is going on?
3. Where is it happening?
4. Why is it occurring there?
5. When did it happen? When is it going to happen?
6. How is it going to happen? How did it happen?

The course focuses on the spatial aspects of population growth and distribution, cultural differentiation, urban growth and decline, the spread of ideas and innovations, regional development, and the location of economic activity, as well as problems associated with these processes.

Human Geography is a study that focuses on the developments and conditions in the contemporary world. It involves an examination of the setting in which people live their lives as part of a continual process of struggle and transformation. The central focus is the analysis of the relationship between society, place and space.

The course focuses on social, economic, political, cultural and human-environment processes and patterns and how they change over space and time. The course aims to engender a critical geographical perspective on the past, present and future developments of the social world.. This critical viewpoint is of crucial importance in the generation of broad and informed understanding of the world.

http://ohs.ousd.ca.schoolloop.com/cms/page_view?d=x&piid=&vpid=1407754859733

3. Model United Nations

I would like to include Model United Nations (MUN) in the list of 9th grade electives as well as a suggested extracurricular social science activity. MUN is an engaging simulation of the United Nations, Security Council or other multilateral body and is an excellent vehicle for enhancing student understanding of diplomacy, negotiation, problem solving and collaborative decision making. In August 2013 I developed a team at San Marcos Middle School with the intention of taking them to the *Global Classrooms* International Middle School MUN Conference in New York City. Two years in a row I witnessed profound emotional, social and intellectual growth in my students as they collaborated with international students and flourished in this fully engaging simulation. They learned a variety of important C3 Framework skills including public speaking, researching, and persuasive writing. During the school year and prior to the March New York conference, our student delegates joined middle and high school students from San Diego, Orange, and Los Angeles Counties several times at variety of conferences held at UCSD, Mission Viejo High School and the University of San Diego's Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice.

<http://www.unausa.org/global-classrooms-model-un>

4. **Chapter 8** - 5th Grade American Indians content Page 129 Sentence 163

Instead of the guiding question that begins with “How did American Indians change as a result of the new settlers?” I suggest the following: “What impact did European settlers have upon American Indian tribes?”

5. **Chapter 12** - 8th Grade *The West* Cherokees’ (and Navajo) Trail of Tears: Indian Removal Page 346 Line 584

While 8th grade narrative/content focuses on the creation of our country with its system of government, manifest destiny, slavery and civil war, very little is said about the impact of an expanding United States had on native populations. I found one sentence fragment, “They **might** discuss the searing accounts of the removal of Indians and the Cherokees’ Trail of Tears;” With the question “How did Manifest Destiny contribute to American expansion?” I would also add “and what was its impact on American Indians?”

Absent from the content is the Navajo “Trail of Tears” that is described in detail in Hampton Sides’ *Blood and Thunder* and described at oneofmanyfeathers.com and “The Navajo nation’s own “Trail of Tears”” at NPR. Navajo removal is significant to our historical legacy and involves scout Kit Carson well known in California history. The story also lends itself to the creation of a geography lesson that examines the size of tribal lands/reservations nationwide. I recommend adding the Navajo “Trail of Tears” to our Framework either on page 346 or other page per the discretion of the Commission.

Ideally we want all of our students to be literate in the Social Sciences, included in the story of America and, most importantly, civically engaged. It is my hope that this Updated History-Social Science Framework provides our teachers and district curriculum coordinators a guide to ensuring the development of educated citizens well into this new century.

Thank you.

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Curriculum Framework and Evaluation Criteria Committee,
History-Social Science Framework Update 2009

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